

## Global Meeting of the Policy Forum on Development Brussels, Belgium - 13 to 15 March 2019

More than 130 representatives of civil society organisations (CSO), local authorities (LA), professional and business associations, EU Member States and EU institutions gathered in Brussels between 13 and 15 March 2019 for the 7th Global Meeting of the Policy Forum on Development (PFD). On the agenda, to highlight, in particular the role of partnerships in the 2030 Agenda implementation and specifically the environmental and climate components, as well as the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) and the proposal for a new Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI).



### Introduction and discussions on the 2030 Agenda



The PFD was opened by Stefano Manservigi, Director General for International Cooperation and Development, Directorate General for International Cooperation and Development, European Commission, who stressed that “the PFD is important as it allows us to discuss and turn the partnership into one that sets policies and pushes a movement on what Europe can do.” The LA and CSO co-chairs also welcomed the participants and reminded them of the important role of civil society and local authorities in “localising” the SDGs. The panellists called for a rights-based approach while discussing how inequalities impact the

deterioration of democracy and human rights, with many examples coming from Latin America. The 2030 Agenda should guide all our policies and programmes, not only development cooperation. However, more coherence in European policies is needed to avoid a dichotomy between trade agreements and sustainable development. Partnership and a “whole of society approach” is essential and the participants stressed the need to work together, the PFD being an important space in this respect.

Director General Manservigi agreed that the SDGs should be implemented locally by involving all actors and that governments must internalise the 2030 Agenda. He also commented on the reflection paper that is currently under preparation, which includes the strategy for internal and external implementation of the SDGs; how to mainstream the use of SDGs as an agenda for policies; and how to make external actions stronger.

In parallel sessions, PFD participants exchanged good practices on SDG implementation and local partnerships, noting the importance of identifying the goals and objectives of the partnership; securing a budget to reach the shared goal; and eventually, institutionalising the partnership to avoid the loss of institutional memory when key partners leave the partnership. Another group discussed innovative and effective ways of financing. For the latter, PFD members pointed to the need to safeguard human rights and decent work standards when cooperating with the private sector. Another debate focused on equitable and fair fiscal harmonisation and the necessity of involving

civil society to ensure an enabling environment before proceeding with public private partnerships. A third parallel session was dedicated to different experiences with voluntary national reviews (VNR), where PFD members underlined the need for more accountable, clear and institutionalised monitoring processes. The EU should promote multi-stakeholder consultation for the VNRs and support parallel processes such as shadow reports to encourage that all voices are heard. The EU can also promote inclusion in the Joint Synthesis Report as part of its own accountable, transparent reporting at the High-Level Political Forum.

## The Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) and Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI)

The proposed structure and budget of the future Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) was presented to PFD members, who expressed some concerns regarding: the lack of a specific budget line for local authorities; the emphasis on geographic programming; strong focus on security; and the approach to migration. Participants encouraged the EU to ensure that the PFD remains a space to work together, and to find ways to engage and support LAs in the implementation of the SDGs. This CSO-LA-EU partnership would help advance the needed “localisation” of the SDGs. Participants requested better visibility of the 2030 Agenda, clearer gender equality commitments (not lumped with human development) and clear funding paths for local authorities. A recurring request was heard to ensure private sector accountability in development cooperation. One concrete suggestion was for the EU to take advantage of partner’s networks to identify counterparts at national or local level to support the design/implementation/monitoring and evaluation of EU External Investment Plan (EIP) projects. PFD discussions did clarify mechanisms for engagement and offer reassurances, which will need to be reiterated in future discussions of the initiative.

## Environment & Climate Change

Keynote speaker **Jürgen P. Kropp**, Deputy Chair, Climate Resilience and Head of Urban Transformations, Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research, provided scientific evidence that with the current Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) we will attain 2 degree in 2050, which has important consequences as highlighted in the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) of the United Nations report on 1,5 degrees.



## Conclusions and final communiqué

Neven Mimica, Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, European Commission, closed the 2019 Global PFD meeting. “Your discussions over the past few days have demonstrated the great impact our partnerships have in implementing the 2030 Agenda.” He also added that with “the proximity and first-hand knowledge of local authorities; the voice and energy of civil society and the creativity and innovation of the private sector we can build a world which leaves no one behind.”



A draft communiqué summarising the main recommendations and discussions was presented by the CSOs and LAs at the closing session opening the floor for comments from the participants. The final communiqué can be downloaded here: <https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/file/90648/download?token=p1fEeiNk>

## Discussions with the signatories of the Framework Partnership Agreements (FPAs)

One day of the PFD was dedicated to discussions with the FPA signatories only and to a parallel session with the private sector. The importance and improvements in the voluntary national reviews (VNRs) and the role of joint programming with Member States in achieving a “2030 Agenda for all” were underlined, as well as the important role of LAs in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as they are “closest to the citizens at local level.”

Participants were also updated on the expanded membership and subsequently revised charter of the PFD to include all FPAs and more diaspora organisations, foundations and local authorities. As well, the PFD is now an ad-hoc group (previously a European Commission expert group), assuring the continued membership of the European Parliament. The FPAs worked part of the day in smaller groups. The group on stocktaking of the Framework Partnership Agreements (FPA) discussed the strengths and weaknesses of FPAs. They are a strong tool for dialogue; have the freedom to define their own strategies; bring together a common agenda and raise visibility; can influence policies; and facilitate networking of CSOs and LAs with the EU. Participants were concerned about the lack of predictability of support and continuity of financing, and called for a more structured policy dialogue, as well as increased sharing of best practices among the FPAs. The group focusing on how the FPAs engage with the EU’s External Investment Plan (EIP) expressed concerns around inclusion of the private sector and requested monitoring systems, transparency and accountability measures. The EU needs to ensure a transparent and accountable manner of gauging the involvement of the private sector in development work. The role of the private sector continues to be a major concern and point of discussion for many members of the PFD. The group discussing engagement with EU Delegations (EUD) suggested having a higher-level directive for EUDs to engage with civil society and local authorities throughout delegations (rather than via one focal point); including all stakeholders in policy dialogue at national level; increasing coordination amongst FPAs in approaching the EUDs; and improving communication on the activities of both the EUDs and the FPAs.